



DO LIKEWISE

LIVING THE GOSPEL THROUGH COMPASSION & JUSTICE

A Companion Guide To *Gospel Justice*

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The book *Gospel Justice* is available from Gospel Justice Initiative at www.gji.org, or from Moody, Amazon, Christian Book Distributors and most local book stores.

INTRODUCTION

DO LIKEWISE

Living the Gospel through Compassion and Justice

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING how God might use these materials to deepen your understanding of His heart for justice. Through prayer, study and thoughtful action you can be part of a broader movement of the Spirit which is transforming lives and communities in the name of Jesus.

Do Likewise is designed as a companion guide to the book Gospel Justice. Chapter questions are included within each of the five sessions. While intended as an additional resource to the book, the guide could stand alone. The sessions are designed to be flexible to draw people together so they can explore deeper issues of justice. This can be done individually or as a family, small group, adult class, youth group, book club or other group. The sessions can be weekly, monthly, or broken into additional sessions depending on the needs of the group or individual.

Each session begins with a key point before examining what the Bible has to say; the book Gospel Justice and this guide reference 65 books of the Bible. The session continues with “what you have to say,” action steps you can take individually or as a group, and “going deeper”. Each session links to video at www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice. Other information may be found at www.gji.org.

While many ministries exist to meet the important compassion needs of the poor (food, clothing, shelter, etc.), the challenge of Do Likewise is to go deeper. Often assistance in these areas treats symptoms rather than addressing the underlying justice issues. Doing compassion *with justice* helps restore individuals and right broken systems.

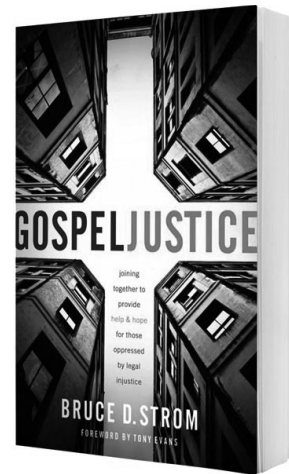
As you enter into this study pray for opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ to those around you. Listen and learn from one another. Be sensitive. Someone in your group will either have experienced these issues of injustice or will know someone who has struggled with the law or government. Encourage one another. Pray for eyes and hearts to be opened to the leading of the Spirit as you seek opportunity to help the victim of injustice on the Jericho road.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR GROUP SESSIONS

(1 hour broken down as follows):

5 MIN	Show 1st video
10 MIN	Discuss key point and opening story.
15 MIN	Review what the Bible has to say.
15 MIN	Review questions from chapters.
5 MIN	Discuss "What will you do?"
5 MIN	Prayer
5 MIN	Closing video

60 MINUTES TOTAL



SESSION 1

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT JUSTICE?

Foreword, Introduction, Chapter One

*“You have worn out the LORD with your words. And yet, you ask, “How did we do that?”
You did it by saying, “The LORD is pleased with evil and doesn’t care about justice.”*

MALACHI 2:17 CEV

KEY POINT: God cares about justice. So should we.

HER PARENTS TRIED TO WARN HER, but she did not want to listen. Now she had no choice but to make the call for help. Justine needed to go home.

Justine stared at the phone remembering the day of her wedding on a beach in California. She was so happy. She remembered the day her daughter was born, just 23 months ago, and the thought brought tears to her eyes. She looked into the face of Grace, her daughter, and received the hope she needed to place the call.

Her mom answered. Justine was so glad to hear her voice. She was afraid her mom might be upset and say, “I told you so”. But instead she listened, cried, and extended an open invitation to return home. Justine remembered how difficult it had been for her mom to see her daughter and granddaughter leave when she followed her husband to Illinois to live in a home owned by his parents while he looked for work. Justine grew up in California and knew no one in Illinois. As a young mother she wanted to serve her husband, but his idea of service was a summons – a complaint for divorce filed on day 91 in Illinois – the minimum days needed to file a case. She was also served with an eviction notice. Her husband had met another woman and moved the family to Illinois so he could be with her. He assumed Justine would have no money, be compelled to return home to California, and forced by law to leave Grace behind.

Justine now sat in a woman’s shelter trying to be strong for her daughter but terrified of the future. Her mom prayed for her and promised the door would be open. Airline tickets were purchased, but her husband filed an order of protection to prohibit Grace from leaving the state. If Justine stayed she would be homeless. If she left with Grace she would violate a court order. Where could she find help? The woman’s shelter gave her another number to call. She called Administer Justice.

A staff attorney met and prayed with Justine. The attorney contacted a local church who agreed to find a family Justine and Grace could stay with if needed. A volunteer attorney was contacted to go to court and challenge the jurisdiction. Because of Gospel Justice initiative's national network, we were able to contact a justice center in California to file a case required under the complex custody laws across the country. As a result of this team of people which included a local church, attorneys and other individuals who provided transportation and practical assistance, the case was dropped in Illinois and Justine and Grace moved back to California.

Justine needed more than compassion assistance. She needed justice. Justice matters. Without justice, she might have remained homeless or forcibly separated from her daughter. She could be another statistic of a single mom with a child under the age of six representing the largest group in poverty. As she struggled with the unfairness of life in a husband who abandoned her, being forced out of a home, and fearful of the future, she could have despaired. Instead her faith was strengthened and she now walks hand in hand with Grace. She sent this photo and note:

“We believe that God’s Hand was on this situation. Thank you so much for taking the case, reaching out and believing in me and seeing that there needed to be justice. You will never be forgotten. Our family can’t thank you enough for all your hard work and dedication to help us in this case. It would have been impossible to afford any legal help but Administer Justice was able to step in and assist. It has been a difficult journey but one that has brought us closer to God. You will be in our prayers always. We pray that Administer Justice would be blessed abundantly and that God would continue to use your group to bless those who are in need of justice!”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

Discovering God’s heart for justice

MANY PEOPLE STRUGGLE with justice. Life is not fair. God is not fair. Why should I follow a God who allows so much suffering and injustice in the world? Often the problem is that we want justice to reflect our desire not God’s. That is my story from the introduction. I don’t think I’m alone. If we are honest I think we often define justice to mean what is “right for us,” not what is “righteous.”

Watch the video
“Seek Justice”



http://youtu.be/zz5_5lhSLg0



In Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, there are two primary words used for justice – *tzedek* and *mishpat*. In English we translate *tzedek* as either “righteousness” or “justice”. In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the word used is *dikaio*s or *dikaio*sunae, both of which are translated in English as justice or righteousness.

Have you ever thought of those words as the same?

How might that affect your view of justice? Of righteousness?

The Bible’s view of justice is one of restoring what is broken by sin; of righting relationships first with God and then with our neighbor. This is why the book defines Gospel Justice as applying God’s transcendent truth through just relationships. Justice requires understanding who God is and how He acts in relationship with us. The Bible says “The Lord is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the works of their hands” (Ps. 9:16 NIV). “For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice” (Ps. 11:7). “The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love” (Ps.33:5). God cares about justice.

Read Psalm 146:

What does this passage say about God’s heart for justice?

Jeremiah tells us that King Josiah “gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn’t that what it means to know me? says the Lord” (Jer. 22:16 NLT).

To know God is to practice justice. For God is “a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows” (Ps. 68:5). “He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor” (Ps. 72:4). “For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help” (Ps. 72:12). God asks the same of us – “Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Ps. 82:3-4). Put plainly, “Evil people don’t understand justice, but those who follow the Lord understand completely” (Prov. 28:5 NLT).

Understanding what God’s word has to say about His heart for justice is important. “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Num. 23:19; 2 Pet. 3:9). God promises justice. He acts in justice. He desires the same of us.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

Foreword

Do you agree with Dr. Evans that much ministry today is spent mopping up messes rather than unplugging stoppers? Why do you think that is?

Introduction – Where is justice?

The introduction shares stories of how I wrestled with the concept of justice. I struggled with the unfairness of not being able to have children while other children were abandoned or abused. I struggled with the unfairness of being sued and unjust circumstances at work. I struggled with the unfairness of God asking me to surrender my identity, money, and life.

Have you ever struggled with unfairness? Do you believe God is sometimes unjust? (See Rom. 9:14-15). Share how God in His faithfulness brought you through such struggles.

God showed me that when I defined justice in terms of my wants and desires, I completely misunderstood what justice meant. Justice is not about what I believe is fair. I needed to see justice as God sees justice. Justice is essential to who God is and how He acts. To know God is to do justice. That understanding of justice compelled me to focus less on myself and more on the needs of others. Otherwise I was pursuing the way of Absalom, King David's son, who twisted justice for his own ends and built a monument to his name (2 Sam15:4; 18:18). I want to be like David's son Solomon who had wisdom from God to administer justice (1 Kings 3:28).

Ask yourself what it might mean to answer the question at the end of the introduction – “Will you leave the comfort of the boat to step into the storm of injustice?” That is a question to continue to explore throughout these sessions.

Chapter One – Lessons from the Good Samaritan

Have you ever thought about the answer to the lawyer's question – “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” What, if any, new insights did you gain from reading the first chapter?

More than 2,000 verses address God’s heart of justice for the poor and vulnerable. Justice matters to God. People matter to God. What does that mean for you?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Take the poverty and justice quiz at the end of this first section. Review the answers at the end of these materials. What surprised you? Take some time to discuss.

Over the next four sections we will examine the needs of the Bible’s vulnerable quartet: the widow, the fatherless, the alien and the poor. God has a heart for these individuals who are often oppressed, marginalized and represent ‘the least of these’ (Mt. 25:40). We have great opportunity to serve these neighbors in need.

Close your time with the music video – **My own little world** (www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice) – and spend time in prayer.

Pray that God will open your eyes to the opportunities around you this week.

FOR FURTHER ACTION

Do an Internet search on “legal needs of the poor.” You may find several of the articles and studies helpful.

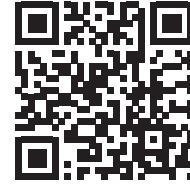
Take a trip to your local courthouse. The public can sit and observe proceedings - you will gain valuable insights into the fear facing those who find themselves involved in our legal or government systems.

Pray that God will make you more just. Pray that God will use this study to open the eyes of your heart to new ministry opportunities.

Read a different passage each day over the next week and meditate on it: Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1:10-20; Proverbs 31:8-9; Psalm 45:6; Zechariah 7:9-10; Amos 5; Ps. 37.

Memorize Micah 6:8 – “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Watch the video
“My Own Little World”



<http://youtu.be/GuVSe1Cz4Es>

Rent the movie, *Amazing Grace*, and talk about the courage and perseverance of William Wilberforce in standing against incredible odds to bring justice to the English slave trade.

For further reading consider Ken Wytsma's book, *Pursuing Justice*, published by Thomas Nelson.



GOING DEEPER

Consider purchasing the Poverty and Justice Bible produced by the American Bible Society and World Vision. This Contemporary English Version of the Bible highlights more than 2,000 verses which address poverty and justice. Review the highlights and the special center section of the Bible. Every book of the Bible except for Song of Solomon is cited in Gospel Justice or these support materials. While Philemon is not quoted, the book is about the tension between the law which allowed slavery and the freedom we find in Christ which Paul urged Philemon to consider in welcoming back his former slave. Every book cries out for justice. Justice for the poor is the second most prominent theme in Scripture. Study the Bible. Follow a one year reading plan at www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans. As you read through the Bible notice the theme of justice that weaves throughout Scripture.

POVERTY AND JUSTICE IN AMERICA

8 Questions for Raising Awareness on Poverty & Justice in America

Most Americans think of poverty and injustice as global problems – not American problems- but do you know the answers to these eight questions:

1. THE LARGEST NUMBER OF POOR PEOPLE IN THE U.S. LIVE IN:

- A. Urban areas
- B. Suburban areas
- C. Rural areas

2. TRUE OR FALSE: THE UNITED STATES PROVIDES FREE LEGAL COUNSEL IN CIVIL CASES FOR ALL WHO CANNOT AFFORD AN ATTORNEY.

3. THE NUMBER OF POOR IN THE U.S., ELIGIBLE FOR FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE (BELOW 125% POVERTY LINE):

- A. 46 million – 1 in 8.
- B. 60 million – 1 in 6.
- C. 28 million – 1 in 12.

4. THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE ELIGIBLE WHO ARE ABLE TO RECEIVE LEGAL ASSISTANCE:

- A. 75%
- B. 25%
- C. 3%

5. THE UNITED STATES UPHOLDS THE RULE OF LAW. IN PROVIDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE WHICH COUNTRY(S) PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS:

- A. China.
- B. Iran.
- C. Neither.
- D. Both.

6. WHERE DOES THE U.S. RANK WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD AS A DESTINATION FOR TRAFFICKED WOMEN?

- A. 12th
- B. 2nd
- C. 22nd

7. THE LARGEST POVERTY DEMOGRAPHIC IN THE COUNTRY IS:

- A. An unemployed, generally homeless, male with alcohol, drug or mental health issues.
- B. An immigrant.
- C. A single mom, often working, with a child under the age of six.

8. HOW IMPORTANT IS JUSTICE TO GOD? IN THE BIBLE, POVERTY AND JUSTICE IS

- A. The 10th most prominent theme with over 300 verses
- B. The 6th most prominent theme with over 500 verses
- C. The 2nd most prominent theme with over 2,000 verses

SESSION 2

SEEING INJUSTICE

Chapter 2, Chapter 3

“If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you.”

LEVITICUS 26:19

KEY POINT: Help as one who needs help: you could be the victim on the Jericho road.

JESUS HELPED PEOPLE. Everyone knew it. Crowds followed Him in hopes of seeing a miracle or experience healing. No religious leader spent the time that Jesus spent among the common people. He was a friend to tax collectors and sinners. And His words. No one ever taught the way Jesus taught. News spread quickly about this young rabbi. So imagine the surprise of those sitting in the temple that day. They knew of Jesus. But now He stood in the center of the temple.

What would He read? Purposefully He selects a scroll, unrolls it, and begins reading from the prophet Isaiah.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19).

You are surprised when Jesus stops reading. Normally more would be read, but the young Rabbi has read what needed to be read. He looks at all those present and says, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

Only once does the Bible reveal Jesus reading the Scripture. The occasion was significant. Jesus told those present that Isaiah was speaking of the Messiah who would come to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, and to set free the oppressed. He would loose chains of injustice and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor for all who would listen. That is good news! But I wonder if those present that day fully grasped what Jesus had just said. I wonder if we do.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

Discovering God's heart for justice

The Bible offers good news to victims of injustice. Since sin entered the world the truth is that we are all victims of injustice. There would be no hope - no good news - if God had not chosen to stop and sacrifice everything for us. Jesus told us that is why He came.

What do you think of when you hear the word gospel?

Some of us might think of the first four books of the New Testament frequently called the gospels. These books tell the good news of Jesus. Some might think of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15 of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus. Some might think of Jesus' words in Luke quoting from Isaiah and equate them with the good news of the present and coming kingdom. All this is good news.

Have you ever heard the Apostle's Creed? "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead..." Whether creeds are part of your church tradition or not, I think many of us think in terms of the Apostle's Creed. We talk about the birth and death of Jesus for our sins. We build our church calendars around Christmas and Easter. But I think we are missing something. I think we are missing 33 years of Jesus life!

If Jesus only came to die, his birth hardly seems necessary. If death was the only purpose, three years of ministry seems unnecessary. Jesus could have found a faster way to the cross. But Jesus came to live and set an example for us on how we should live. We need Jesus' life to show us what it means to love our neighbor, to serve others, and work toward the kingdom of justice and righteousness. The Gospel is the good news of salvation, but it is also the good news of Jesus' life and service toward the poor and vulnerable. We need to share the good news of salvation while living out lives marked by service to the least of these. The gospel itself is a message of justice, and true justice cannot be separated from the whole truth of the gospel. That is a gospel justice that invigorates us to love God and love our neighbor. To be the Samaritan and stop to serve our neighbor in need.

Consider the book of Job. Job loses his family, property, and health. He is harangued by friends who blame him for his condition. Read the following passages: Job 12:5; 19:7; 29:11-17; 31:13-22; 40:8-14.

“I THINK WE ARE MISSING 33 YEARS OF JESUS LIFE”



The Bible makes clear that Job was a just and righteous man and yet he experienced hardship. While his friends wanted to blame Job, they made God angry for speaking lies. In the end God reminds Job that He alone is God and His ways are not our ways. “He is the rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he” (Deut. 32:4). Job’s friends were like the Israelites who continually forgot they were once afflicted and oppressed without hope and the Lord raised up judges to save them (Judges 2:18).

What can we learn from Job about justice?

Chapter 2 shares the story of Horatio Spafford who was a successful attorney who lost his son, his business and then his daughters through three separate tragic circumstances within a year. What would you do in the face of such injustice? Spafford wrote the hymn, *It is Well with My Soul*.

Watch the video “**It is well with my soul**” (www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice) and then spend some time praying together.

Watch the video
“It is well with
my soul”



http://youtu.be/T8_EfDqF7YI

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

Chapter 2 – Lessons from the Injured

Imagine your son or daughter lying on the road to Jericho. They are too weak and vulnerable to help themselves but they see good religious people coming only to walk on by. The pain of injustice is multiplied in our country when we fail to provide help and hope to our injured neighbors who see prosperity all around them, but feel neglected and cast aside. Those trapped without access to justice feel like justice is cold and hard – “Just ice”.

Which story, statistic or scripture caught your attention in chapter 2? Why?

Chapter 3 – Lessons from the Robbers

Much abuse and exploitation takes place in this country because we don’t want to believe such issues can take place in our neighborhood. The robbers want justice to be “just I see”. They use fear and intimidation to prevent victims from speaking. They tell others to turn a blind eye. They don’t believe the Lord sees. But the Bible is clear:

“to deprive a man of justice – would not the Lord see such things?” (Lam. 3:36). The answer is yes. “O Lord, you took up my case; you redeemed my life. You have seen, O Lord, the wrong done to me” (Lam. 3:58-59a).

Why do you think neighbors are often surprised when the news reports injustice that is discovered near them?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

The widow: While not all widows are seniors, our seniors in America face a multitude of issues. From abandonment like Wilma in chapter one, to housing like Garret or identity theft like Mabel in chapter three, they often suffer in silence. Frightened, intimidated and embarrassed seniors don't speak out when they are victims of financial exploitation or physical abuse. There are many schemes to defraud older individuals who need help. As our older neighbors face the loss of a spouse they need practical help with estates and finances. As they face government benefit issues and tax questions, they can be overwhelmed. As they face end of life issues they need help from elder care to wills to powers of attorney to guardianships. Let's not turn a blind eye. Let's not walk past the needs of the widow.

Close your time with the video **Justice for All** (www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice). You will meet Wilma from chapter one and Garret (Grant) from chapter three. Pray for them and pray for other seniors who deserve honor and the hope of our loving Savior instead of isolation and abuse

FOR FURTHER ACTION

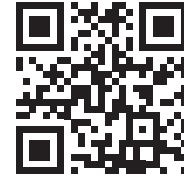
Do an internet search of “elder abuse” or “financial exploitation”. The articles may surprise you.

Read a passage a day over the next week and meditate on it: Job 5:16; Dt. 22:22; Jms. 2:24; Ps. 27:13; Prov. 14:20; Ecc. 4:1; Lk. 4:18-21.

Memorize: “So the poor have hope and injustice shuts its mouth” (Job 5:16).

Visit a Senior Services, nursing home, or retirement community and spend some time listening to seniors and care providers.

Watch the video
“Justice For All”



<http://bit.ly/1kuNK5C>

Visit www.epodunk.com to learn more about your local area demographics on the poor, seniors, senior housing and other local issues and needs.

Watch the movie Spiderman 2. Aunt May, a wise widow, provides a wonderful monologue that can also be viewed on You Tube (I believe there's a hero, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVX-cUJGdxs>). Super Heroes remind us of the importance of sacrificing for others. There is a hero inside each of us who follow Christ – the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers us to live outside ourselves in the service of others.

Read Richard Stearns new book *Unfinished*, published by Thomas Nelson. The book helps you explore who God is, what your purpose is, and then encourages you to engage in the work of the Kingdom

GOING DEEPER

Prayer is the greatest power against injustice. We wrestle not with flesh and blood. Evil is real and so are its effects. We can address the effects of injustice in our own strength – although we shouldn't - but we cannot attack the roots of injustice apart from prayer. Prayer should surround all our efforts. As you come alongside people in need ask to pray with them – not just for them. Don't force prayer. If someone is not comfortable then honor that and pray for them separately. Enter into a person's world and listen to their heart. Help them focus on what they can control and put together a plan of action for those matters, but also help them identify what they cannot control and encourage them to commit those matters to prayer. Those are items only God can address. Involve others in prayer. Prayer is something every person can do - even young children. Make prayer a regular habit along with the study of God's word. Many of the Psalms are prayerful cries from the heart. Go before the throne of justice and cry out to God. Learn to wait and listen for His leading. Consider keeping a journal so you can look back and see how He has provided.

“I don't know how to help her.” Judy entered my office to seek guidance. She is a wonderful, compassionate lawyer you can meet in Chapter 6 (p. 102). Judy shared Sheila's story.

Sheila's mother died following years of care by Sheila. The mom recognized Sheila's devotion, the serious criminal challenges of her son, and left the home entirely to Sheila. Sheila's brother thought that was unfair and accused her of brainwashing the mom. The fight over the estate left the brother angry and he threatened to kill Sheila.

Before he could carry through on this threat he wound up in prison for other matters. The conflict and threat left Sheila paralyzed by fear.

Unable to work Sheila isolated herself and when the inheritance ran out, the home went into foreclosure. That is what brought her to our office. Judy prayed for Sheila, but found it difficult to help her understand her options and realized she would need help. We put together a plan for help and hope. We would have our prayer team praying, involve a volunteer attorney and realtor to help with a short sale, a local church to help with the move, and regular contact with Sheila for encouragement. Sheila remained terrified. Her brother could be released at any time and she was certain he would kill her. She wanted to establish a complicated land trust to try and hide from the brother.

On the day Sheila moved into her smaller home, one of the volunteers shared the hope of the gospel with her. Sheila prayed to accept Christ. She had heard many pray for her over the months we worked with her and she asked if she could pray. Her first prayer was for her brother. Unknown to her he had been released from prison and two days later she ran into him at a grocery store. With fear gone and new found faith, she was able to reconcile with her brother. She continues to pray for his salvation. The prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective.



SESSION 3

PRIEST, LEVITE OR SAMARITAN?

Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 6

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
LETTERS FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL

“The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

EDMUND BURKE

“First they came for the socialist, and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a Jew.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me.”

MARTIN NIEMOLLER, A GERMAN LUTHERAN PASTOR DURING THE NAZI REGIME

KEY POINT: Don’t miss God’s opportunity. Get involved in justice.

JUST IMAGINE. You wake up one morning. Your four children are off to school, your husband off to work. You’ll leave for work soon but treasure the quiet time over coffee in the house your husband built. Before you know what is happening you see the broken coffee cup on the floor. The next thing you know you are in a hospital room being told you suffered a massive stroke from which you will never fully recover.

Just imagine. Your wife suffered a devastating stroke. You suddenly find yourself trying to juggle four kids and work while you drive back and forth from the hospital. Life has taken an unexpected turn, but isn’t finished yet. Coming home from the hospital you don’t even have time to react. An uninsured drunk driver crosses the center line hitting you head on. You feel the excruciating pain as you hear the snap of your back. Multiple surgeries later you find yourself confined largely to a wheel chair and disabled.

Just imagine. Medical bills mount, and you receive a foreclosure notice. The resources you once had are depleted. You can't afford legal help. What do you do?

Injustice is no respecter of persons. The challenge in America is that victims of tragedy often pull back from help. Whether a victim of abuse or circumstances, we somehow feel like we aren't supposed to have problems. Too often victims blame themselves, and sometimes Christians fuel that blame. Like Job's friends we can believe the poor are suffering divine retribution instead of following the Bible's command to love our neighbor through practical help.

Frank and Juanita felt that way. They are the injured neighbors in the story. A judge saw their tragic circumstance and wrote a letter to Administer Justice asking for help. We brought together churches and individuals to help. One attorney intervened on behalf of the family in foreclosure, one assisted in bankruptcy and others investigated other options available to the family. We established a benevolence fund so scores of good people in the community could give to help the family back on their feet.

Just imagine you are lying on the Jericho Road and several strangers stop to serve you without any expectation in return. The impact is significant. As Juanita said, "Thank you everybody for helping. We never thought there were people out there that were willing to help."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

Discovering God's heart for justice

Justice requires action. Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. Act, love, walk – each are action words requiring us to go and do likewise. Be just, merciful and humble as you stand against injustice. Jesus' discussion with the lawyer in Luke 10 began with a question of how one enters the kingdom. The answer was obedience to the great commands of loving God and loving our neighbor. But who is our neighbor? The response made clear that the neighbor is the victim of injustice near us. If we are commanded to love our neighbor and our neighbor is the one near us who needs us to act justly, then justice is love in action. Justice demonstrates love to wounded neighbors in need.

Watch the video
"Micah Bourne"



http://youtu.be/N50rb-_Vd0o



READ AND DISCUSS THE FOLLING VERSES:

Mt. 11:19, Col 4:5, Jn. 13:14-17, Jms. 2:8-9, 15-17,
1 Jn. 3:16-18

Who do you identify with? Are you the Levite and the lawyer who find it unfair that God would love everyone? Do you secretly want to add something to John 3:16 so it excludes undocumented immigrants, moms with children out of wedlock, homosexuals, unemployed, Muslims, the disabled or others? Do you think deep down that God is pouring His judgment upon them and like Jonah want to preach that wrath and sit by and watch it executed? Do you believe justice is someone getting their just desserts? Consider Prov. 17:5 and James 4:12.

Do you identify with the priest? Do you say to yourself, “I wish I had time to help. I see the need but don’t have the time. In a few years that will be different and then I can help “JAR” people into action by getting involved with the ‘Jericho Accidents along the Road’ Society. I’ll make a note to do that when I get the time.” We are all busy. But would Jesus approve of our “to do” list? We all make choices. Jesus’ challenge was to not pass the opportunity to do justice. The needs of the many can be overwhelming but the lesson of the priest is that it begins with one. It begins with you. Don’t miss God’s opportunity.

Do you identify with the Samaritan? You want to help. You want to see injustice. You have made the decision not to miss the opportunity to serve others. You have experienced God’s grace in your life and that grace makes you just. You’ve seen God work in amazing ways and you know He can do that for the victim of injustice. You “never tire of doing what is right” (2 Thess. 3:13).

God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary tasks. He does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called. “Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve, you don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don’t have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don’t have to know Einstein’s theory of relativity to serve. You don’t have to know the second law of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Spend time talking about who you most identify with and why? Share what struck you and what insight you gained from this exercise or the chapters.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

Chapter 4 – Lessons from the Priest

Chapter four addresses apathy. What happens when justice, just is. When we fail to incorporate justice into our lives, it lacks definition and meaning. We can become so focused on our own agenda that we fail to understand what it means to seek justice. Our plans stand in the way of God's plans. Like the priest we may miss an opportunity in our busyness to live justice by loving our neighbor.

Have you ever sensed that God created you for bigger things? Not necessarily grand, famous things, but ordinary, yet transformational things. Ordinary people like Rosa Parks who just wanted to sit down on a bus. Doing the right thing for the right reason that makes a significant difference. Did Rosa Parks know the impact she would have by refusing to give in to injustice? No. Do you know the impact you can have by sitting with someone facing the pain and injustice of having no access to our justice system? Ordinary acts can have extraordinary impact.

What prevents you from experiencing the fullness of God's plan for your life?



Chapter 5 – Lessons from the Levite

Chapter five addresses judgment. Have you ever felt like justice was getting one's just desserts? Are you a recovering Pharisee like me? Do you know why God destroyed Sodom? There was great evil in the city, but the evil which aroused God's wrath might surprise you. "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49).

What would Ezekiel say to us today?

Daniel was not afraid to challenge King Nebuchadnezzar for his lack of concern for the oppressed. "Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed" (Daniel 4:27).

How can we overcome our self-focus to be more other focused?

Chapter 6 – Lessons from the Samaritan

Chapter six addresses the power of unexpected service. Giving time, money and service makes a real difference in the lives of wounded neighbors in need. Have you experienced the joy of sharing with others in need?

Have you ever heard someone say, “God loves a cheerful giver”. They are quoting 2 Corinthians 9:7. Rarely do you hear the context in which Paul was writing. Paul was thanking the Macedonian Christians for their generous support of the poor above and beyond their support of the church (2 Cor. 8:1-12; 9:6-15). He was encouraging Christians to be generous in obedience to the generous work of Christ in their lives. Their generosity caused a watching world to praise God and served as a “confession of the gospel of Christ.” 2 Cor. 9:13. The gospel should make us generous.

Paul was also specifically addressing justice. Remember when we studied the word justice in Hebrew – *tzedek*? Well here’s a Hebrew “ah” moment. The Hebrew word *tzedekah* means generosity. God will be generous toward those who are generous (*tzedekah*) and conduct their affairs with justice (*tzedek*) - justice toward the poor and vulnerable (Ps. 112). A true understanding of generosity is rooted in justice. This is evident in Paul’s quoting from Psalm 112 (2 Cor. 9:9 quoting Ps. 112:9).

Read Psalm 112:1-5 and talk about the blessing that comes with being generous.

*I said, ‘Plant the good seeds of righteousness (or justice),
and you will harvest a crop of love.
Plow up the hard ground of your hearts,
for now is the time to seek the LORD,
that he may come
and shower righteousness (justice) upon you.*
Hosea 10:12

Justice and generosity go together. The gospel makes us just. The gospel makes us generous. Plant good seeds of justice and righteousness and reap a harvest of love. Pray that God plows up the hard ground of your heart - where there is judgment, pray He will sow mercy and grace. Pray for God to awaken you to see the needs of the vulnerable in your midst. Pray that He will make a way for you to make the most of every opportunity. Pray for the opportunity to be generous in giving to the poor.

“JUSTICE AND GENEROSITY GO TOGETHER.
THE GOSPEL MAKES US JUST.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

The Fatherless: Consider the plight of the fatherless. Sometimes we narrowly think of the word fatherless as orphan. While an accurate rendering of the word, it can equally apply to those with no father. The lack of fathers is a financial and spiritual blight on our nation. More than 25% of children live in a poverty household and while some are two-parent households, most are single parent households. Nearly 60% of all single moms with a child under the age of six are living in poverty. More grandparents are raising children today. Many children across the country bounce from one house to another without a stable home. These homeless children often suffer from educational instability and food instability. Many need temporary or permanent guardians. Some are abandoned. Some are abused. They need help. They need hope that the future will not be as unstable as the present.

Close your time with the music video, “**Give me your eyes**” (www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice) and spend time in prayer. Pray for children growing up in a difficult world full of injustice. Pray against abuse and violence.



FOR FURTHER ACTION

Do an internet search of “homeless children” or “child poverty”. The articles may surprise you.

Read a passage a day over the next week and meditate on it: Ps. 89:14; Ps. 82:3-4; Mt. 23:23; Prov. 17:5; Jms 2:12-13; Isa. 30:18; Jn. 15: 11-14.

Memorize: “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right. Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (Isa. 1:17).

Look up your school district and find the homeless liaison. Make an appointment and ask them what needs they are seeing and how you might be able to help. Look at the number of students eligible for free lunch. Adopt a school near you and learn what is needed. Don't assume. Churches often hand out backpacks before school begins. When we encouraged a church to talk to their local principal he smiled and took them to a storage area filled with backpacks. “We don't need backpacks. We need math and reading tutors.” Listen and learn what the needs are and pray for opportunity to meet those needs.

Watch the video
“Give me your eyes”



<http://youtu.be/P5AkNqLuVgY>

Involve your children in raising money for Gospel Justice Initiative so that people can be trained to speak up for the fatherless. Hold some other type of awareness fundraiser to involve others.

Examine the questions on page 35 and consider asking yourself these same questions at the end of each year.

Watch the movie *One Night with the King*. The movie is the story of Esther. Consider Mordecai's advice to Esther: that she not remain silent and miss being part of God's deliverance. Contrast that with the Eunuch's advice to stay silent: the Bible is just a bunch of foolish stories. Why risk one's life for other people? Consider Esther's brave response to Mordecai – "fast and pray for me and I will take a stand even if it means losing my life." And also Esther's response to the Eunuch – "Do you know what I like most about the story of David and Goliath? It was not that David fought well, but that he believed well." While that last dialogue is not in the book of Esther it is certainly in keeping with Esther's courageous faith.

For further study read *Generous Justice* by Tim Keller.



GOING DEEPER

Serve others. Take some time to monitor what you say during a day. Do you enter into conversations because you have a need to be heard or understood? Or do you draw out from others their story and their needs? Observe what others do this next week.

Serving others does not merely mean doing a good deed. It means entering into another person's world. Listen and learn from them. Don't jump in with all the answers. Share your story and experiences in a way that points toward God and what He taught you through a situation or what He is teaching you now. Humility is the hallmark of a Christ follower. And if we are to walk humbly with our God then we will walk where He walked and that means humbly serving others.

SESSION 4

MOBILIZING THE CHURCH AND GOD'S PEOPLE FOR JUSTICE

Chapter 7, Chapter 8, Chapter 9

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms"

1 PETER 4:10

KEY POINT: Use what you have, where you are, to join together in pursuing justice.

THE AIR WAS ELECTRIC. He couldn't remember seeing so many people so excited. The excitement was contagious. Only twelve years old, he pushed his way through the crowd so he could see Jesus. Many were saying Jesus was the Messiah, the King who would free Israel from Roman injustice. He could see him now: The strong rabbi talking to one of his disciples. Just then someone grabbed his arm.

"What's your name, boy?"

"Benjamin."

"What have you got in that cloth?"

"Lunch, sir. I brought five loaves and two fish." The man smiled.

"Call me Andrew. Would you like to meet Jesus?"

Before he could answer he was led to Jesus. One of the disciples was saying, "Teacher the needs are too many. We have to send them away. Eight months wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Then he turned to the boy. “Son, may I have your lunch?”

The boy could have looked at the needs like Philip and thought his gift was too small to make a difference. He could have looked at his lunch and concluded that others who didn’t plan ahead did not deserve to eat – it would be a good lesson for them. He could have decided to give a small part of his lunch, the leftovers, as a gesture of good will without any real sacrifice on his part. But he did not. The boy looked at Jesus and in that moment, without hesitation, he gave everything to him.

Jesus smiled and took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. All ate and were satisfied. The disciples gathered what remained and filled twelve baskets. A miracle. The needs of 5,000 men plus women and children were met that day, because of the faith of a boy.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

Discovering God’s heart for justice

The Bible tells the story of the boy in John 6:1-15. We don’t know the boy’s name, but the story is true to the text. Like the widow and her sons in chapter 7 of the book, the Bible is filled with stories of people who by faith are asked to give what they have to God and allow Him to “do abundantly more than we can ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us” (Eph. 3:20).

The justice needs of the poor can appear overwhelming. Like Philip it is easy to believe the needs are too great and the resources too few, so better to avoid altogether. God’s word is clear – “Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless, or the widow” (Deut. 27:19). Jesus was testing Philip’s faith. Can you identify with Philip?

Or like Andrew, do you look for opportunity to give and encourage others to be generous. “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11). Andrew did not know how the Lord would provide but he was willing to find someone with resources and bring them to Jesus. Andrew trusted that Jesus would provide. “He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry” (Ps. 146:7 NLT).

Professionals like lawyers and pastors can fall into the challenge of Philip. Both have great demands placed on their time. Both feel the justice needs of the poor can be overwhelming. Better to send them away. But God has given what is needed – the heart of a generous boy. The Bible is replete with stories of people

Watch the video
“Justice for someone
like me”



<http://bit.ly/1p5rDU5>



“TO IGNORE JUSTICE AFFECTS THE VERY HEART OF WORSHIP”

who stepped out by faith and God provided. Moses did not feel qualified to lead the people of Israel. He believed he did not have the knowledge to speak and lead. In fact he told God, “O Lord, please send someone else to do it” (Ex. 4:13). Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses (Ex. 4:14). Don’t test God. If you are a lawyer you have special knowledge given to you by God to be used in His service. And that means serving the poor and vulnerable. “He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses” (Prov. 28:37).

Pastors find themselves so busy in the demands of ministry that they can be overwhelmed by the thought of yet another program opportunity. Pastors carry heavy burdens before God and must be encouraged and supported. I encourage pastors to not look at justice as another program, but as an underlying theme to all programs, designed to come alongside existing ministries and improve their impact. To ignore justice affects the very heart of worship.

In Zechariah 7:4-14 the people were abusing the fast and religious celebration instead of administering true justice by standing up for the poor and vulnerable. So God refused to hear their prayers.

In Isaiah 58 the people said they were eager to pursue God. They actively engaged in fasting and religious ceremonies but their hearts were selfish. They did not break the chains of injustice, help the poor, or fight oppression. So God would not listen to their prayers.

In Isaiah 1:10-20 the people were making offerings, fasting, engaging in religious ceremonies and praying, but they were inwardly focused. God told them to stop doing wrong and learn to do right by seeking justice for the oppressed, fatherless and widow. By having the right heart before God demonstrated through just actions, their sins though they be like scarlet would be white as snow.

In Amos 5:6,7, 10-15, 21-24 the prophet warned Israel not to turn a blind eye to injustice. Time and again he says we must seek justice in the courts on behalf of the poor and vulnerable. God despises our religious assemblies, offerings and worship music, “Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

CHAPTER 7 – LESSONS FROM THE JERICHO ROAD

The passages examined in this session indicate that when we are busy going through the motions and focused on our own needs, our prayers are hindered. By contrast the widow in chapter 7 demonstrates the power of persistent prayer rooted in justice.

What do you think about the role of prayer in combatting injustice?

Do you ever struggle with not feeling adequate to address the needs around you? What might we learn from chapter 7 or the story of the boy in John? What will that mean for you?

What do you think about systemic justice issues? Perhaps the greatest systemic issue facing our nation today is the challenge of our immigration system. We explore this further in the *Action* and *Going Deeper* sections of this session.

Chapter 8 – Lessons from the Inn

Chapter 8 focuses on the importance of the church as the bride of Christ. Have you ever known spouses who became so busy pursuing their own interests that they drifted apart? Can that happen to a church? Can the church become a place for just us, instead of justice?

What does it mean to reflect the character of our Creator? To become one with our husband—Christ, the head of the church?

What other insights did you gain from the chapter?

Chapter 9 – Lessons from the Lawyer

Whether you are a lawyer or not it is likely that you can identify with the challenge of living a busy, divided life. Do you ever feel like being BUSY is Being Under Satan's Yolk? How might you better prioritize your time?

Many of us find it difficult to fully integrate our faith and our work. What might it mean to see our business as mission and how can we integrate that with God's heart for justice?

“WHEN WE ARE BUSY GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS...OUR PRAYERS ARE HINDERED.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

The alien: one of the great systemic justice issues involves immigration. Following the German occupation of Norway my grandparents immigrated to this country. They met in a Norwegian/Swedish community in Chicago. My grandmother was a nanny and janitor for a Baptist church that allowed them to live in the basement. My grandfather painted houses. Like many immigrants they had limited education and did not know English. They were hard workers and desired a better life for their son. They were people of deep faith.

Today our immigrant neighbors often reflect this same sense of values. The fastest growing churches in America are immigrant churches. America is a nation of immigrants. We are a nation that appreciates the desire for freedom, faith and a living wage. I am the product of immigrants who raised a godly son who would not live in the basement of a church but lead from its pulpit. My father was a pastor for 40 years before retiring and his ministry impacted thousands of people for the Kingdom. And God is using the grandson of immigrants to further that Kingdom by encouraging thousands of pastors and leaders to impact the lives of hundreds of thousands both in the present and for eternity.

Why shouldn't our nation strive to reflect the coming Kingdom? When Christ returns the only immigration policy is whether you believed in Jesus and demonstrated that belief in action. Every nation, tribe, people and language will be represented in that Kingdom (Rev. 7:9). If we are to work toward that Kingdom then shouldn't we serve all people?

The needs of the alien are addressed throughout Scripture. "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:33-34). We are called to love our neighbor and that includes our immigrant neighbor. The best way to begin is by getting to know our immigrant friends. Then learn the challenges that face this community and remain informed on the debates over reform. The Immigration Evangelical Table, <http://evangelicalimmigrationtable.com>, is a great place to start. This broad group of evangelicals is actively working together to address reform within a Biblical framework. There are many support materials to help. As reform comes, consider training individuals in the church to help bring people out of the shadows. You do not need to be an attorney to become certified to do this work. World Relief and Gospel Justice Initiative can help.

Close your time together in prayer followed by the video – "Did you Feel the Mountains Tremble" (www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice)



Watch the video
"Did you Feel the
Mountains Tremble"



<http://youtu.be/M4pLD1L6WqM>

FOR FURTHER ACTION

Do an Internet search on “immigrant exploitation” or “trafficking in America.”

Consider hosting a Justice Sunday at the church, tools are available at www.gji.org.

Consider hosting an education forum on immigration or another systemic justice issue in your community.

Read a passage a day over the next week and meditate on it: Hag. 1:6; Nah. 1:7; 1 Chron. 29:10-19; Joel 2:13; Ex. 23:6; Dt. 8:17-18; 1 Sam. 2:8.

Memorize: “He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun” (Ps. 37:6).

Watch the movie *Les Miserables*, which demonstrates the tension between justice and mercy. Compare and contrast the characters of Jean Valjean and Javert. Also discuss the importance of demonstrating grace and mercy even in a single act as done by Bishop Myriel (the priest who not only allows Jean Valjean to keep what he has stolen but adds precious candlesticks as well).

Read the book *Welcoming the Stranger* by Matthew Soerens and Jenny Hwang.

GOING DEEPER

The importance of community: It is not good for man to be alone. We were created for community. Injustice in America separates people from community. Most often the poor and vulnerable feel isolated and alone. We all have social and spiritual needs. As individuals come with legal needs it is important to remember both the social and spiritual needs as well.

What social ministries do the church have which can be of assistance? What social agencies exist in the community that could provide further assistance? A justice ministry for the poor is one of the best bridge-building ministries within a community. Every community has legal needs and nearly always those needs are not being met. A church can be a light in the community by opening its doors for these needs.

At the same time do not neglect the spiritual needs of the poor. Do not force church attendance, but invite others to be part of the church, small group or helpful outreach program of the church. Help the poor and vulnerable know that you care and want to see them fully restored. That will take time and the best place to spend that time is in the fellowship of loving Christ followers. Think about ways you can lovingly invite someone to be part of your community of faith.



SESSION 5

WHAT IT MEANS TO GO AND DO LIKEWISE

Chapter 10

*“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. **Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them”***

JOHN 13:14-17, EMPHASIS ADDED

KEY POINT: Christ Followers follow Christ. Translation: Go and Do Likewise.

GLORIA SAT BY THE ROAD SOBBING. Around her lay her possessions. She was evicted from her apartment, not for failure to pay rent, but because her brother-in-law and his new girlfriend decided to keep Gloria’s children. Gloria knew how eviction felt – that is how she came to live temporarily with her brother-in-law and his girlfriend. But now the girlfriend had forged Gloria’s signature on a document that made it appear Gloria was trying to sell her two children. The brother-in-law called the child welfare department (DCFS), and threatened to notify ICE for deportation if Gloria did not leave immediately and began removing her possessions. She now sat angry and alone by the road.

Several people passed Gloria before a car stopped. Honestly the couple thought Gloria was holding a yard sale but then the woman recognized Gloria – they had gone to school together. The couple moved Gloria’s possessions and allowed her to stay with them. When they learned of Gloria’s plight they began to seek help. They found assistance at local food banks but were unable to get answers to Gloria’s legal questions. One of the agencies referred Gloria to Administer Justice.

By the time Gloria walked through the door of Administer Justice the brother-in-law was already collecting food stamps and government benefits for the children. He had filed a report against the mother and since she was hiding in fear, her troubles with DCFS had grown. The receptionist noticed how angry and afraid Gloria was and pulled her aside. She spoke with her in Spanish about how Jesus asks us to cast our burdens upon him and Gloria accepted Christ. With a new Spanish Bible in hand, Gloria met with a volunteer attorney who contacted the child welfare agency and talked Gloria through how to meet with them and let them know the truth. As Gloria was preparing to leave, a Hispanic pastor walked in to visit our receptionist. The receptionist introduced them and it was discovered that Gloria was staying five houses down from the church.

Gloria followed the attorney's advice and the children were returned to her. She began attending the church with her children. Gloria was an injured neighbor literally lying on the road with people passing her by until one couple chose to stop. That couple served their wounded neighbor in need. They were Good Samaritans. The agency seeking to provide more than compassion to Gloria by referring her for justice was a Good Samaritan. The receptionist who noticed Gloria's anxiety and led her to the Lord was a Good Samaritan. The volunteer attorney who listened, made a call, and guided Gloria through the overwhelming circumstances she was facing was a Good Samaritan. The pastor who divinely connected with Gloria was a Good Samaritan. The unseen donors who make justice ministry possible were Good Samaritans. Together each stopped to serve. God used all these individuals to restore a woman and a family. And God will use you if you stop and serve.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

Discovering God's heart for justice

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible demonstrates the good news of God reconciling and restoring people to Himself. "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4:7). "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12).

Sin brought injustice into the perfect world of creation. We could not master sin without the cross. Jesus bore the greatest injustice so we could understand justice. He asks us to do the same. He asks us to deny ourselves – our time, our fear, our resources, our excuses – and pick up our cross and follow Him (Mt. 16:24). Follow Him to the poor and vulnerable.

Watch the video
"Across the Street"



<http://youtu.be/tJFZfv00dGU>

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom” (Jms. 3:13). “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (Jms 4:17). “But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 Jn. 2:5-6).

The Bible is not a lullaby. The Bible is a love letter pleading for action. Love God. Love your neighbor. “And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands” (2 Jn. 1:6). Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly as you serve others and seek justice. Let love compel action and dispel fear. “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). Share that hope. Wash feet. Wash wounds. Stop on the Jericho road. Make a difference as you engage in serving the legal and spiritual needs of the poor.

Consider what Matthew records Jesus saying in Mt. 7:20-25; Mt. 10:42 and Mt. 25:31-46. How important is it to do what D.L. Moody said and “wrap our Bible in shoe leather?” To put into practice what it means to be a Christ follower.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?

Chapter 10 - Go and do likewise

The final chapter challenges our view of Jesus. Some think of Him as always passive and gentle. But Jesus could not abide injustice any more than His Father. Jesus challenged the religious leaders of His day with strong words. He took action and cleared the temple of injustice. What struck you from the first part of chapter ten? How does that inform your identity as a Christ follower?

The end of the book has several practical applications. Many of these were incorporated throughout these sessions. The book opened with the question, “Will you leave the comfort of the boat to step into the storm of injustice?” The book closes with the question, “Would you return to your grocery list?” These are important questions. Will you be generous with your time, resources, and prayers? Will you pursue deeper things – the weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness (Mt. 23:23)? Will you “be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them” (Jude 1:23)? Will you take action and get involved?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

So will you return to your daily to do list or will you take up Jesus challenge to ‘Go and Do Likewise’? The choice is yours. Everyone can do something as set out in chapter 10. Here are some practical ways to get involved and make a difference.

Sign up for the Gospel Justice Initiative’s newsletter, follow the blog “Do Likewise”, stay connected on social media – Facebook or Twitter – and join in prayer. Information will help guide your prayers as you intervene before the God of justice who warns: “Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case” (Prov. 22:22-23a).

The Poor: These sessions emphasize the reality that the poor are near us. On one level we are all poor from the effects of sin in this world. That truth should humble us and fill us with mercy toward our injured neighbor on the Jericho Road. As we look for opportunity to fulfill the great commission in our neighborhoods, let us pray, prepare, plan, promote and pursue what the Lord has for us. These steps will take additional time and will likely involve others outside your group. Review them, pray about them, and then pursue what the Lord has for you as you serve the least of these.

We close this study with the video Richard Stearns uses to close his book, *Unfinished*. God created you for a purpose. Each person has an important role to play in advancing His kingdom. Like a symphony and chorus, some are singers, some play the violin, some the bassoon. One might think their role insignificant and isolated it could appear that way. But God sees how all His people work together to create a symphony of praise. Take time to master your gift through prayer, God’s word, and fellowship with others. But don’t just discover your gift – use it. “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16). The world is watching. Heaven is watching. Join Heaven’s symphony of praise. Go and do likewise. Live the gospel through compassion and justice.

Close your time with prayer and the video: Symphony of Praise (www.youtube.com/user/GospelJustice)

Watch the video
“Symphony of Praise”



<http://youtu.be/GBaHPND2QJg>

“THE HARVEST IS GREAT, BUT THE WORKERS
ARE FEW SO PRAY TO THE LORD...”

FOR FURTHER ACTION

Over the next week read the following verses: Ps. 33:5; Ps. 103:6; Ps. 140:12; Prov. 31:20; Isa. 40:29-31; Isa. 56:1; Jer. 22:3.

Memorize: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prov. 31:8-9).

Watch the short movie, Sheep and Goats which is a resource on the Gospel Justice Initiative site, www.gji.org.

Read any of the books listed on the Gospel Justice Initiative site under suggested reading.

GOING DEEPER

Consider joining with Gospel Justice Initiative and establishing a justice ministry in your church. Take the preparatory steps below and visit www.gji.org to become a member. Members receive guidelines, forms, access to experts, discussion forum and other benefits to help them do justice in their community. GJI relies on generous individual donations to provide the support and expertise needed to engage others for local justice ministry. Consider supporting this work. Pray that God will continue to advance His purposes until He returns with a scepter of justice to reign from a throne of justice in the coming kingdom of justice and righteousness upon the earth.

Step One: Pray — “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, ask him to send more workers into the fields” (Mt. 9:37-38 NLT). Prayer is the greatest weapon against injustice – use it! Remember the Lord is in charge. Ask him for workers – an initiating team of 7 to 12 people who have a heart of justice for the poor. If you have access to attorneys some should be included in this group.

Step Two: Prepare — “Without the help of the Lord it is useless to build a home or to guard a city” (Ps. 127:1 CEV). Your group should prayerfully seek to identify needs as set out in the book and this guide.

Step Three: Plan — “You can make many plans, but the Lord’s purpose will prevail” (Prov. 19:21 NLT). Seek the Lord in all your plans. Consider joining together with GJI as a member. We have fun planning tools to help you create your vision, mission, values, goals and objectives for moving forward. Creating these excites others to join with you and provides clear direction and measurable impact for the ministry. This plan will include the need(s) you will address, how you will serve both the legal and spiritual needs, who you will serve and where you will serve.



Step Four: Promote — “Promote justice! Give the oppressed reason to celebrate! Take up the cause of the orphan! Defend the rights of the widow!” (Isa. 1:17 NET). Begin in the church with a Justice Sunday, create fun ways to engage others in what you are preparing to do. Build excitement. Create flyers/brochures and let strategic partners know what you are going to do – social service agencies, legal aid provider, courthouse, school district, or other churches.

Step Five: Pursue — “Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land your God is giving you” (Deut. 16:20 HCSB). Stake out a geographic location you will serve. Pray over that area and then pursue justice. Share the hope of the gospel, provide practical help. As you get involved questions will arise which you can share in our community forum or call GJI for recommendations. Be certain to regularly communicate the impact God is having through you with others and with GJI so we can encourage other centers across the country. You are part of God’s Kingdom doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly before your God.

Answers to Poverty and Justice Questions

Session 1

1. B

For decades the poor population in America's suburbs has grown faster than anywhere else in the country. During the 2000's, the number of poor people living in the suburbs grew by 64% – more than twice the growth rate in cities (29%). Today more poor live in the suburbs than in America's big cities or rural areas. Suburbia is home to almost 16.4 million poor people, compared to 13.4 million in big cities and 7.3 million in rural areas. 2011 figures, Brookings Institute, ConfrontingSuburbanPoverty.org.

2. F

We've all heard the phrase, 'You have the right to a free attorney, if you cannot afford one, one will be appointed for you.' But that only applies to those accused of a crime – not their victims. Innocent victims and those facing civil legal issues must fend for themselves.

3. B

This is the highest number of poor ever. 2010 U.S. Census figures. The census also reports that nearly 1 in 3 Americans experience a season of poverty of at least four months in a four year span of time. Many of the causes of poverty have legal issues at the core.

4. C

Less than 3% are able to find help (approx.. 1.8 million according to Legal Service Corporation figures and the American Bar Association). Lawyers are not required to provide free legal services and most don't. Only 17% of attorneys in Illinois volunteered time for pro bono services for the indigent in 2012. However, many are willing if an organization stands behind them with insurance, mentoring, training and limited time commitment. When combined with an ability to integrate faith and practice the potential for service is great which is why Gospel Justice Initiative was formed.

5. D

The United States arguably has the best justice system in the world. But when someone cannot obtain meaning access to that system it doesn't matter. The United States ranked last in the world in 2010's Rule of Law Index and continues to rank near the bottom of developed nations.

6. B

For the first time in 2010 the United States was listed as a leading source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. Trafficking involves labor and sex trafficking. Sex trafficking frequently involves young teenage girls between 12 and 14, although boys are also subjects of trafficking. The average cost of a slave is \$90 and trafficking is the second largest criminal venture world-wide behind drugs. And the two often are connected. Source: Trafficking in Human Persons Report, Secretary of State.

7. C

58% of single moms with a child under the age of six live below the poverty line. Low wages, child care costs, health costs, and transportation costs all contribute toward the significant challenges facing single mothers in America.

8. C

The Poverty and Justice Bible printed by the American Bible Society highlights more than 2,000 verses which address poverty and justice. Justice is part of God's character, is defined as how he conducts himself, and is the foundation of his throne and the scepter with which he rules. We are made in God's image and should be people whose character, conduct and courts reflect Him.

YEARLY INVENTORY (SESSION 3)

1. HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE GOODNESS AND BLESSING OF GOD THIS YEAR?

- Spiritually
 - In ministry
 - Relationship
 - Family
 - Financially
 - Professionally
-

2. WHAT AREAS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT HAS GOD BEEN WORKING ON?

- Attitude changes
 - Spiritual changes
-

3. IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU DIFFERENT TODAY THAN YOU WERE 12 MONTHS AGO?

- What were the primary influences on your life this year?
- What individuals had a major impact on your life this year?

4. WHAT NEW BIBLE TRUTHS HAVE YOU LEARNED? HOW DID YOU LEARN THEM?

- What truths have you “re-learned”?
- Did you have any key passages which helped you through the year?
- What has God reinforced to you about Himself?

5. WHAT CAN YOU DO TODAY THAT YOU COULD NOT DO A YEAR AGO?

6. WHAT NEGATIVE ATTITUDES, CIRCUMSTANCES OR ISSUES HAS GOD REMOVED FROM YOUR LIFE THIS YEAR?

7. WHAT ARE YOU MOST ANTICIPATING ABOUT THE COMING YEAR?